

EXHIBIT A - DECLARATION 5

For example, it is known within the community that many Dalit Gurdwara congregation members have since left “mainstream gurudwaras” dominated by a “Jatt” Caste leadership and established their own Shri Guru Ravidassia ⁴³ (Dalit) temples of worship.

The problem of acceptance within one’s faith community is deep and existentially perplexing to many Caste-oppressed people. We ask all communities of faith within the South Asian American diaspora to take it as a moral conversation to explore how Caste discrimination operates in their institutions and move with moral clarity to remove its structural and interpersonal manifestation so that our institutions of faith can be truly open to all.

“Everything is savarna (“upper” Caste) - dominant. Everything everyone knows about South Asian culture is savarna. So being from a Muslim Adivasi background, the erasure of my experience is something I am very used to. Erasure is just something I deal with. Otherwise, I would not even have the community I have now, the Muslim South Asian community. Socially, it’s very difficult, it’s a struggle. My culture and language are dying and my “community” has no clue and no desire to learn about it. There is no one to relate to. It is a huge reason why I suffer from depression.” - S.S.



Caste Discrimination in Food Preferences

A key issue of contention in mixed-race, mixed-Caste and South Asian spaces is the seemingly innocuous issue of food preference. While most Americans who are vegetarian or vegan understand their food preferences to be an individual choice, influenced by personal, environmental, or animal welfare concerns, vegetarianism in South Asian communities is quite different. It is deeply linked to Caste mandates and religious dictates. It can be a hot button religious and political issue.

“Upper” Caste Hindus are often vegetarian, whereas Dalit, Adivasi, and many Shudra

Figure 14: Vegetarianism and Caste

